

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NAS:JENGEL:GJB

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TBIO, CG, US

SUBJECT: DWARF CHIMPANZEE PROJECT

REF: NEWLIN-ENGEL MEETING JAN. 22, 1974

FOR AMBASSADOR VANCE FROM JULIEN ENGEL, NAS

1. NAS WOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD TAKE UP DWARF CHIMPANZEE PROJECT WITH PRESIDENT MOBUTU TO OBTAIN PRESIDENTIAL INTERVENTION TO EXPEDITE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PROJECT. ALTERNATIVE COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENT WITH NSELE PRESIDENTIAL ANIMAL RESERVE NOW FAVORED BY NAS OVER PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED LINK WITH IRSAC. PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL INTEREST IN THIS AND RELATED MATTERS NOW VITALLY NECESSARY. FOLLOWING POINTS SUBMITTED FOR BACKGROUND

A) NAS NOW VERY DOUBTFUL OF IRSAC UNDER PRESENT MANAGEMENT AS DEPENDABLE COLLABORATING INSTITUTION. DIRECTOR'S ASSURANCES OF INTEREST AND COMMITMENT, REAFFIRMED DURING RECENT ENGEL VISIT, REMAIN WITHOUT FOLLOW-UP CONTINUING PATTERN OF INACTIVITY AND THIN EXCUSES OF PAST 18 MONTHS.

B) NEWLY EMERGED ALTERNATIVE POSSIBILITY OF SITING BREEDING COLONY IN SPECIAL COMPOUND WITHIN NSELE

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PRESIDENTIAL ANIMAL RESERVE (IN WOODED AREA TRAVERSED BY

SERPENTINE NSELE RIVER) PRESENTS SEVERAL COMPELLING

FEATURES: 1) PRESIDENTIAL PATRONAGE AND RESOURCES LIKELY TO PRODUCE RAPID MOVEMENT: 2) NSELE ZOO VIABLE COLLABORATING INSTITUTION POSSESSING ENTERPRISING PROFESSIONAL ZAIROIS SCIENTIFIC STAFF AS WELL AS SUITABLE FACILITIES (THIS NOT TO EXCLUDE US TRAINING OF ADDITIONAL STAFF AS ORIGINALLY ENVISAGED); 3) PROXIMITY TO KINSHASA SIGNIFICANT CONVENIENCE FACTOR FOR MONITORING BY COORDINATOR, PROMPT MEDICAL ATTENTION IF NECESSARY, AND AS ANIMAL DEPOT FOR FUTURE RESEARCH CENTER.

C) MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IS NEED FOR STRONG PRESIDENTIAL COMMITMENT IN ORDER TO ENSURE AVAILABILITY OF OFFICIAL ZAIROIS LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR FIELD OPERATIONS, ESPECIALLY CAPTURE OF INITIAL PAIR FOR YERKES STUDIES AND OF LATER 20-30 ANIMALS FOR BREEDING STOCK. PRESENT FRUITLESS FIELD STUDIES ALONG FOREST RIM BY YALE AND JAPANESE GROUPS SUGGEST DWARF CHIMPS TO BE FOUND IN NUMBERS ONLY DEEP IN SALONGA FOREST, WELL AWAY FROM VILLAGES AND ROADS, WITH ACCESS PERHAPS ENTAILING HELICOPTER TRANSPORT. THIS FACTOR ALONE MAY MULTIPLY COSTS WELL BEYOND CAPABILITIES OF ANY SCIENTIFIC BODY. THUS PURSUIT OF PROJECT, ESPECIALLY IN STARTING PHASE, DEPENDENT ON GREATER DEGREE OF ZAIROIS COLLABORATION AND MATERIAL INPUT THAN AT FIRST PROJECTED, WHICH IRSAC COULD NOT PROVIDE UNDER BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

D) NAS DOES NOT WISH TO ABANDON IRSAC ALTERNATIVE IN VIEW OF EXCELLENT INFRASTRUCTURE OF MABALI STATION AND POTENTIAL LONG-TERM SCIENTIFIC VALUE OF MAINTAINING TWO WIDELY SEPARATED FACILITIES, ONE LOCATED WITHIN DWARF CHIMP ECOLOGICAL ZONE. OPTIMALLY, NAS WOULD FAVOR NSELE AS SITE FOR LARGER SCALE PRIMARY EFFORT, AND IRSAC MABALI FOR SMALLER SCALE SECONDARY ONE.

E) TECHNICAL STUDIES OF SUITABILITY OF NSELE SITE REMAIN TO BE DONE; NO MAJOR DRAWBACKS ARE ANTICIPATED. IN BROACHING THE NSELE ALTERNATIVE, CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN THAT NAS NOT BE DIRECTLY IDENTIFIED AS THE SOURCE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE IDEA FOR FEAR OF POSSIBLY ADVERSE REACTIONS FROM IRSAC. KISSINGER

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